

Ken, You will be in my heart forever!

Love, Camille

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

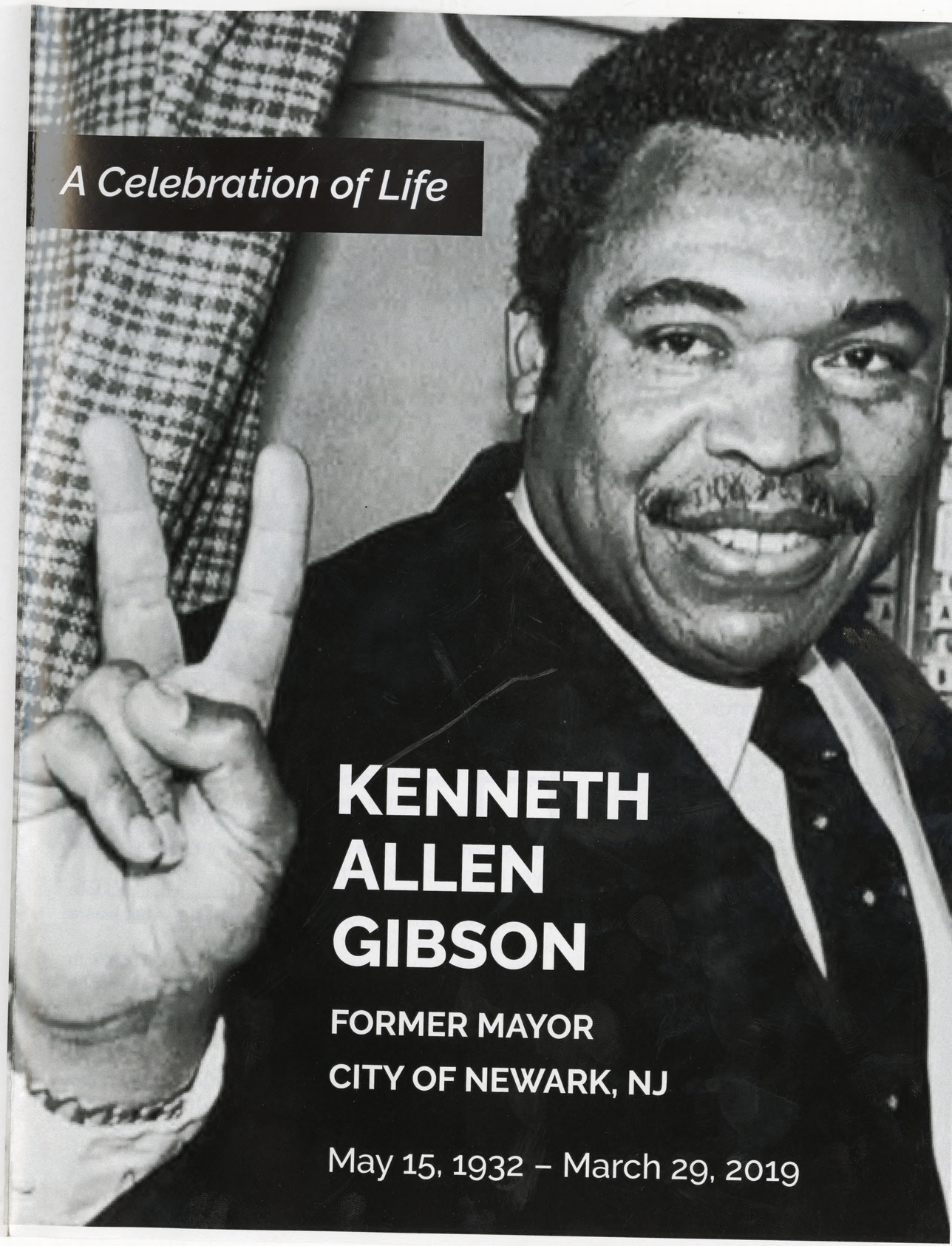
The family of the late Hon. Kenneth Allen Gibson, Mayor, City of Newark, NJ (1970-1986) acknowledges with sincere appreciation the comforting messages, floral tributes, and other expressions of kindness during this time of bereavement. May God bless you. May God bless the City of Newark, NJ.

ARRANGEMENTS BY

Whigham Funeral Home

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Newark, NJ 07102

Carolyn Whigham, Owner/Director (NJ Lic #3888) Kara-Lynn Whigham, Vice President (NJ Lic #4552)
Terry S. Whigham, Manager (NJ Lic #4112)



ORDER OF SERVICE

PRESIDING
Dr. Ralph T. Grant, *VP Pillar College*

MUSICAL PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

OPENING HYMN
"His Eye Is On The Sparrow"
Faith in Action Ensemble

SCRIPTURES
Ecclesiastes 3:1-7 & 1 Corinthians 13
Rev. Dr. J. Michael Sanders, Pastor
Fountain Baptist Church, Summit, NJ

PRAYER OF COMFORT
Bishop Kenneth Pearman, Pastor
Reaching Out for Jesus Christian Center in the Poconos, Brodheadsville, PA

SELECTION
"Praise Is What I Do"
Faith In Action Ensemble

ACKNOWLEDEMENTS & EXPRESSIONS

READING OF THE OBITUARY
Milagros Harris

REMARKS
Hon. Mayor Ras Baraka
Hon. Mayor Sharpe James
Lawrence Hamm
Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver
Mtima Taifa, *Grandson*
Harold Gibson, *Brother*

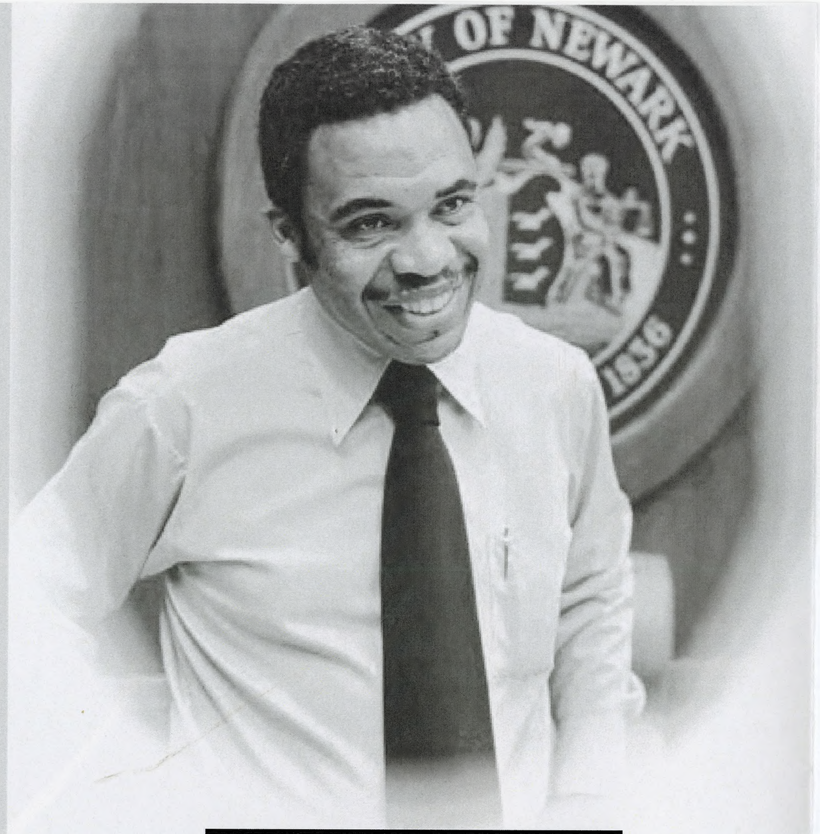
SELECTION
Stand
Faith in Action Ensemble

EULOGY
Rev. Dr. DeForest B. Soaries, Jr.,
Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, Somerset, NJ

MILITARY HONORS

COMMITAL

RECESSIONAL
"My Way" by Frank Sinatra



KENNETH A. GIBSON
May 15, 1932 - March 29, 2019

He was a skilled and seasoned engineer until answering the call of a populace in conflict to guide Newark through one of its most turbulent eras.

But the dedication Ken Gibson brought to his position as mayor from 1970 until 1986 was matched only by the love he had for family members and the joy he felt in being around them.

Those kinships provided him with a vital spiritual antidote so necessary while carrying out the duties of what was a tough job even in the most orderly of times.

Ken cared for his parents, Daisy and Willie Foy Gibson, with a passion and couldn't have been prouder when, as mayor, he took them back to the family's hometown of Enterprise, AL, for the dedication of a park in their names, recalled Ken's only brother Harold.

His oldest daughter, Cheryl Gibson-Fuller, said he doted on his children and grandchildren, regularly picking the younger ones up from school or taking them for haircuts. To inspire a nephew, Ken had an official photo taken of the youngster sitting at his mayoral desk.

If it doesn't already, history will surely look back on the Gibson years as among the most challenging in Newark's more than 350 years.

Ken's ascendance was the product of a groundbreaking upheaval in which he was elected Newark's first African-American mayor and first African-American mayor of a major northeastern city.

Yet from the moment he took office, he was supremely aware of the fine line he would have to walk to keep Newark moving forward while also being more inclusive and responsible.

"I firmly believe that every elected official has a sworn duty to respond to the needs of all the people," Ken noted. *"In my view, an even-handed approach toward Newark's residents would mean matching the greatest benefit to the greatest need."*

His efforts were recognized on a larger stage when he was chosen the first black president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and received a national award for outstanding public service.

Ken came to Newark when he was 7 and graduated from Central High School and Newark College of Engineering (now NJIT). His grandfather, Daniel Robert Gibson, was one of the first blacks to work in Newark City Hall – as a janitor.

Elton Hill, a childhood friend of Ken's and later a city business administrator, said everyone who knew the future mayor as a boy understood he was destined for greatness.

Ken spent 10 years as an engineer with the state and six more as chief engineer with the Newark Housing Authority before becoming the city's chief structural engineer.

During those years, he saw and experienced things that troubled him and caused him once to label Newark "decayed and financially crippled."

He swept into office as a reformer but was confronted by a city suffering from severe economic hardship, as well as profound and painful racial strife. They were issues that didn't go away but that he always approached in his deliberate way.

"Ken was highly principled, almost to a fault," said his wife, Camille. *"He would stand firmly on his principles even, and especially, against the odds."* The Gibson platform for election in 1970 was ambitious, and its goals were carried through subsequent terms: honesty and integrity in office, improved delivery of municipal services, quality board of education appointments, new housing construction, better police protection and greater participation by the city's business community in solving municipal problems.

Years after leaving office, Ken cited his mentoring of young people and improving the city's health services as two of his most important accomplishments.

Ken will be remembered for other things as well – keeping Newark fiscally sound in the 1970s while New York City veered toward bankruptcy, a longstanding belief that Newark's public water system not fall into private hands, his love of music and playing the saxophone and the five marathons he ran (he was the first mayor to finish a Boston Marathon).

In the end, however, it's the image of him leading the city he so loved and never left through the heat and uncertainty of turmoil toward higher ground with a cool head and steady hand that will most likely endure the longest.

They were gifts that God blessed him with at birth and that he, in turn, blessed the city with for eternity. May he rest in peace.

Kenneth A. Gibson leaves to mourn his wife, Camille; daughters, Cheryl Gibson-Fuller, Jo-Anne Gibson Banks, Joyce Williams Bryan (Ivor), and Kennon Hunter (Colin); brother, Harold Gibson (Rev. Dr. Deborah L. Stapleton); grandchildren, Mtima Taifa (Lisa), Verina Banks, David Banks, Jr. (Christina), Jasmine Banks, Nishaha Banks (Katrina), Marcelle Williams Fowler, and Kenneth Allen Williams; 12 great-grandchildren, and a host of nieces, nephews and other relatives and friends, and the citizens of his beloved City of Newark, NJ.

